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TWO OLD LETTERS

ONE FROM ELIJAH P. LOVEJOY, 1837; THE OTHER FROM
GEN. CHARLES E. HOVEY, 1858; THE ORIGINALS
OF WHICH ARE IN THE ILLINOIS STATE
HISTORICAL LIBRARY.

A LETTER FROM ELIJAH P. LOVEJOY TO ERASTUS WRIGHT.

The following letter is a characteristic one and bears upon the subject, then a burning one, the liberty of the press, the cause for which Mr. Lovejoy soon afterward gave his life. Mr. Wright was a noted anti-slavery worker of Sangamon county and an operator of the Underground Railroad. The letter is followed by a petition to which he asks signers.

The letter was presented to the Illinois State Historical Library by the late Hon. William H. Conkling of Springfield.

It is as follows:

ALTON, Sept. 8, 1837.

Dear Br. Wright,—

The friends and brethren here have thought it best that some such paper as the one opposite should be signed and published to the world before the Observer starts again. It was drawn up by Mr. W. S. Gilman. A copy will be signed at Quincy, at Jacksonville, at Springfield and at Alton. Will you circulate it in Springfield and out at Chatham, and after getting what names you can forward it to me, *as soon as possible*. Do take some

pains to get signed as extensively as possible and as speedily too, and forward to me here.

Yours in the cause of truth,

ELIJAH P. LOVEJOY.

N. B. It is intended that the names with the paper shall be published.

To our fellow citizens of the State of Illinois

ALTON, Sept. 7, 1837.

The Subscribers Friends of the Liberty of the press having consulted in regard to the path of duty relative to the re-establishment of the Alton Observer after a careful and prayerful examination of the subject, have concluded to procure a new press and locate it at Alton.

The question of the supremacy of the law of our State is one of deepest interest to us all, and we do not feel at liberty to yield to the violence of a mob.

We therefore in the fear of God and solemn(l)y appealing to him for the rectitude of our intentions, are determined to sustain the laws, and guard the freedom of the press without reference to the fact whether we agree or differ with doctrines of it. We freely forgive the outrage already committed on our rights and our property, and without feelings of revenge, or any intention to provoke opposition we publish our determination to our fellow citizens. We deprecate violence but are determined to yield to nothing but law. With no other feelings than those of good will and affection towards all men, we declare we will never yield the sacred rights secured to us by our fathers of freely speaking, and publishing our opinions various and diversified as we know them to be.

A NOTE BOOK WRITTEN BY ERASTUS WRIGHT.

It is an interesting fact in connection with the publication of Mr. Lovejoy's letter to Mr. Wright that we have recently had the privilege of seeing a small blank book

or memorandum book, once the property of Erastus Wright, now owned by Mrs. Z. T. McGinnis, 1128 South Fourth street, Springfield, Illinois, Mr. Wright's grand niece. It is in the handwriting of Erastus Wright, written about the time of Lincoln's death. It is mainly filled with genealogical notes on Mr. Wright's family, but it has some notes on Mr. Lincoln, a few sentences of which we quote:

"I have often thought there was a peculiar Providence of God in raising up Mr. Lincoln at *this place* and at *this time* where the Subject of Slavery and its enormous guilt and Horrible wickedness was held up to view in Public and Private and in the Streets weekly until it became so odious that but few could endure it—

But Mr. Lincoln was a thinking man and knew that I could live without bearing for 25 years those curses and abuse. I said My God made me an Abolitionist. Mr. Lincoln was my near neighbor and fast friend from the time I first saw him at work on a flat boat on the Sangamon River about 7 miles N. W. of this City (Springfield).

After Mr. Lincoln was Elected President while we were together in his Reception room He says Mr. Wright, the first time I saw you was at the Sangamon River where I was at work on a flat boat and you came along assessing the County. I remember it distinctly and how he looked. Boots off, Hat, Coat and Vest off, Pants rolled up to his knees, and Shirt wet with sweat and combing his frazzle hair with his fingers and he Pounding away on the boat."

"My inscription over his photograph was 'Too merciful for earth. Assassinated by slavery.' "

LETTER OF CHARLES E. HOVEY TO SAMUEL WILLARD, JULY
12, 1858.

Charles E. Hovey was one of the organizers of the Illinois State Normal School at Normal and intimately

connected with educational work in the State. This letter is interesting in connection with the beginnings of the State Normal school work. Mr. Hovey, in August, 1861, assisted in the organization of the Thirty-third Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment and was commissioned its colonel.

The regiment was known as the "Schoolmasters' Regiment." Colonel Hovey became a brigadier general and a major general by brevet.

He died in Washington, D. C., November 17, 1897.

The letter was written to Dr. Samuel Willard, who presented it to the Illinois State Historical Library.

It is as follows:

STATE NORMAL UNIVERSITY,
Bloomington July 12 1858.

My Dear Sir,

The ultimate "curriculum" of study has not yet been authoritatively passed upon, but it will include, beyond a doubt Latin & German to an extent equal to that indicated to you in the conversation you refer to. Your department is that of language—for the present English & Latin—ultimately, I cannot speak by authority, but probably Latin & German.

Our teachers spend six hours in the school room—five in teaching & one in observing. We must be governed by the wants of the school, however, in this as in everything else. I desire that you shall join us with a heart, hand & head ready to labor to build up a great & thoroughly good school. The eyes of a State are upon us. We must succeed at whatever cost.

We shall need you *extremely* at the *beginning* of the coming term. The Board (no less than I am) is adverse to the employment of temporary teachers. At the beginning of the year new students come in, & receive their *first impressions*—these are lasting. They must not be made by ordinary men—such as we could obtain for two

months, & then dismiss. Cannot you transfer your present duties after the middle of Sept.? or if that may not be, do both for 6 or 7 weeks? I will favor you all I can here.

Yours Truly,

C. E. HOVEY.

P. S. Can't you come up & see me next week? I can then open to you more fully our plans than I have yet done—

This week I shall be in Peoria, but next week I shall be at home & should be glad to confer fully with you—

HOVEY.

*This letter was written to Dr. Samuel Willard with reference to his becoming a teacher in the State Normal University. He assumed such place in the following autumn, and held it one year. He resigned in 1859 because he could not afford to be in constant collision with a fellow-teacher, who ended his stormy career by suicide.

S. W.

*This note, signed "S. W." was written by Dr. Willard on the margin at the end of the letter.